

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 690

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: RC MEMBER CRITICIZES POPULAR DEMOCRATS, DISCUSSES
POLITICAL SCENE

REF: LISBON 0634 (DTG 291525Z JAN 76)

SUMMARY: REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL MEMBER CPT SOUSA E CASTRO
JAN 29 CRITICIZED POPULAR DEMOCRATIC PARTY
FOR ITS "AUTHORITARIAN TENDENCIES," WHILE COMPLIMENTING
SOCIALISTS FOR THEIR MORE FLEXIBLE APPROACH. HIS COMMENTS
INDICATE THAT THE POPULAR DEMOCRATS STILL HAVE FAR TO GO TO
CHANGE THEIR RIGHTWING IMAGE IN SOME ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT
(AFM) CIRCLES. END SUMMARY.

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1. DURING MEETING WITH EMBOFF JAN 29, REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL
(RC) MEMBER CPT SOUSA E CASTRO MADE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

-- AFM-PARTIES PACT: WORK ON REVISION OF THE PACT SHOULD BE COMPLETED QUICKLY. DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SOCIALISTS (PS) WENT EXTREMELY WELL. ALL OUTSTANDING ISSUES HAD BEEN RESOLVED TO THE SATISFACTION OF BOTH SIDES. THE "PARTIES OF THE RIGHT" MAY RAISE SOME ADDITIONAL OBJECTIONS BUT THEY SHOULD BE MANAGEABLE. THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CENTER PARTY, FOR ELECTORAL REASONS, MAY REFUSE TO SIGN THE REVISED PACT.

-- ELECTION TIMETABLE: AGREEMENT IS ALMOST ASSURED ON THE HOLDING OF LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS BEFORE PRESIDENTIAL AND MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS. ALTHOUGH THE SOCIALISTS HAVE NOT FINALLY COMMITTED THEMSELVES, THEY WILL PROBABLY ALSO GO ALONG WITH HOLDING LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS FIRST, AS FAVORED BY THE OTHER MAJOR PARTIES.

-- A MILITARY PRESIDENT?: SOCIALIST LEADER SOARES'S RECENT STATEMENT SUPPORTING A MILITARY CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT IS WELCOME NEWS. THERE IS A SEGMENT WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES WHICH WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT CIVILIAN DIRECTION IF THINGS REALLY BECOME DIFFICULT FOLLOWING THE ELECTIONS.

-- PPD CRITICIZED: SOCIALIST FINANCE MINISTER SALGADO ZENHA WAS CORRECT WHEN HE TOLD "JORNAL NOVO" JAN 28 THAT PARTIES OF THE RIGHT HAD MUCH IN COMMON WITH THOSE OF THE LEFT (SEPTEL). BOTH HAVE AUTHORITARIAN TENDENCIES. BOTH FIND IT DIFFICULT TO LIVE WITH OPPOSITION. PPD CERTAINLY FITS THIS DESCRIPTION. IT IS UNWILLING TO GIVE IN GRACEFULLY WHEN COMPROMISE IS REQUIRED. IT IS UNABLE TO DEAL WITH ORGANIZED LABOR. THE UNHELPFUL ATTITUDE OF THE PPD CONTRASTS WITH THAT OF THE PS. THE SOCIALISTS HAVE SHOWN THEMSELVES CAPABLE OF DEALING WITH THE OPPOSITION AND COMPROMISING DIFFERENCES.

-- RC ROLE: THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL IS IN TRANSITION. IT IS MOVING FROM A MAJOR LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS TO THAT OF GUARANTOR OF DEMOCRACY AND CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER. THE FUTURE ROLE OF THE RC WILL BE DENIED IN THE REVISED PACT
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WITH THE POLITICAL PARTIES AND SUBSEQUENTLY IN THE CONSTITUTION. THE LIKELY OUTCOME IS AN RC WHICH WILL EXERCISE A ROLE "SIMILAR TO THAT OF AN UPPER CHAMBER OF BICAMERAL LEGISLATURE;" BUT WITH MORE NARROWLY DEFINED POWERS. IT COULD INITIATE CERTAIN TYPES OF LEGISLATION, BUT THE ASSEMBLY WOULD HAVE TO APPROVE IT. IT WOULD HAVE BROADER POWERS IN AREAS OF PROFESSIONAL CONCERN TO THE ARMED FORCES. IT WOULD ALSO RETAIN VETO POWER IN CERTAIN AREAS, SPECIFICALLY THOSE DEALING WITH THE MILITARY

ESTABLISHMENT.

-- RC STRUCTURE: THE ELABORATE RC COMMITTEE STRUCTURE IS LARGELY A THING OF THE PAST. DECISIONS ON ALL IMPORTANT MATTERS ARE NOW DEALT WITH IN PLENARY SESSION, USUALLY WITH MOST OF THE 19 RC MEMBERS ATTENDING. REGULAR MEETINGS HAVE BEEN REDUCED FROM A WEEKLY TO A BIWEEKLY SCHEDULE. THE RC HAS FOUND IT HAS MUCH LESS TO DO AS IT SEEKS TO REDUCE ITS ROLE IN POLITICS. RC STILL FUNCTIONS WITH A VERY SMALL STAFF. HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF OTHER OFFICIAL POSITIONS, INDIVIDUAL RC MEMBERS CAN DRAW UPON PERSONAL STAFFS AS WELL. RC CAN ALSO CALL UPON OUTSIDE SUPPORT FROM EITHER THE GOVERNMENT OR THE PRIVATE SECTOR IF NECESSARY.

2. COMMENT: SOUSA E CASTRO WAS EXTREMELY CORDIAL THROUGHOUT THE MEETING; HIS MOOD WAS ONE OF GENERAL OPTIMISM. HIS COMMENTS ON THE STATUS OF PACT NEGOTIATIONS AND THE ELECTORAL TIMETABLE, CONFIRM INFORMATION PREVIOUSLY REPORTED (REFTEL). HIS VIEWS ON THE PPD, NOT ONLY SUGGEST HIS PS SYMPATHIES, BUT -- IF SHARED BY OTHER RC MEMBERS -- INDICATE THE PPD STILL HAS A LONG WAY TO GO IN ITS EFFORTS TO CHANGE ITS RIGHTWING IMAGE IN SOME AFM CIRCLES.
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